

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN
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INFO SECDEF WASHDC
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USDEL MBFR VIENNA
USNMR SHAPE
CINC EUR VAHINGEN

S E C R E T BONN 14379

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, NATO, MBFR, GW
SUBJECT: MBFR: FRG VIEWS ON THE FRENCH DATA PROBLEM

REF: PARIS 24480 DTG 23165LZ AUG 76

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH VISITING US MBFR
DEPREP DEAN IN BONN, FONOFF MBFR DIRECTOR RUTH PROVIDED CURRENT
GERMAN VIEWS ON THE PROBLEM POSED BY THE FRENCH DATA
POSITION, FUTURE TACTICS FOR CONDUCTING THE DATA DISCUSSION,
AND HOW MBFR IS PERCEIVED BY GERMAN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC OPINION.
RUTH THOUGHT IT WOULD STILL BE WORTH WHILE TO APPROACH THE FRENCH
AGAIN ON DATA, PROVIDED THE ALLIES CAST THEIR APPROACH IN
SPECIFIC TERMS AND PROVIDED THE COLLECTIVITY AND PARITY CONCEPTS
WERE RETAINED WITHOUT COMPROMISE AS THE HEART OF THE WESTERN
POSITON. RUTH REFERRED TO THE VULNERABILITY OF THE WEST TO
PUBLIC ATTACK BY THE EAST THROUGH CONTINUED DELAY IN TABLING
NEW WESTERN DATA AND SAID DATA ISSUE MUST ULTIMATELY BE SOLVED
IF NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO GET ANYWHERE. HE ALSO REAFFIRMED

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THAT BI-PARTISAN POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD

PROBABLY CONTINUE PROVIDED THE BASIC WESTERN APPROACH ON THE SAME TWO PRINCIPLES REMAINED UNCHANGED. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION, FONOFF DISARMAMENT DIRECTOR ROTH AND RUTH STRESSED FRG DESIRE THAT MBFR NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUE. END SUMMARY.

1. DEAN VISITED BONN AUGUST 26 ON A PERSONAL BASIS TO HEAR VIEWS OF AMB ROTH AND RUTH PRIOR TO RETURNING TO WASHINGTON FOR CONSULTATIONS.

2. ON THE FRENCH DATA POSITION, RUTH EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THE FRENCH WOULD PROBABLY STICK WITH THEIR HARD POSITION AS ARTICULATED BY MISTRAL TO THE ALLIES IN PARIS (REFTEL). HOWEVER, RUTH BELIEVED THAT THE ALLIES WERE CERTAINLY NOT PRECLUDED FROM MAKING FURTHER APPROACHES AND/OR PROPOSALS TO THE FRENCH. RUTH SUGGESTED THAT THE U.S., UK AND FRG CONSIDER PREPARATION OF A TRILATERAL NON-PAPER WHICH MIGHT BE GIVEN TO THE FRENCH BEFORE THE ISSUE WAS RAISED IN NATO AGAIN. RUTH EMPHASIZED THAT ANY PAPER USED IN FURTHER DISCUSSION WITH THE FRENCH SHOULD BE CAST IN SPECIFIC TERMS. THUS FAR, THE FRENCH RESPONSE ON THE DATA ISSUE HAD BEEN COUCHED ONLY IN GENERALITIES, I.E., A DESIRE TO AVOID ENTANGLEMENT IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. FURTHER DISCUSSION WOULD BE WORTHWHILE ONLY ON BASIS OF A SPECIFIC PROPOSAL, POSSIBLY CAST IN THE FORM OF A DRAFT NAC GUIDANCE TO AHG. THE FRENCH SHOULD SEE PRECISELY WHAT THE ALLIES HAD IN MIND. PERHAPS THEY WOULD BE LESS CONCERNED ABOUT THE DATA ISSUE AND THEY MIGHT EVEN MAKE SOME PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT. AT ANY RATE, GIVING THE FRENCH A PAPER WOULD SHOW THEM THE ALLIES WANTED A SOLUTION AND THAT THE PROBLEM WOULD NOT GO AWAY.

3. RUTH EMPHASIZED THAT IN FORMULATING SUCH A "NON-PAPER," THE CENTRAL ALLIED CONCEPT OF PARITY MUST NOT BE VIOLATED. IF IT WERE, IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR THE WESTERN PARTICIPANTS TO RETURN HOME RATHER THAN CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS. RUTH SAID HE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE FRENCH STATEMENTS THAT THE FRENCH WERE NOT INTERESTED IN SABOTAGING THE NEGOTIATIONS. IN RUTH'S VIEW, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT CONSIDERED THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS A MARGINAL AREA FOR FRENCH POLICY AND THEREFORE NOT WORTH POLITICAL STRIFE WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.

4. RUTH INDICATED THE LIMITED AREA OF FLEXIBILITY HE HAD IN
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MIND WAS TO GIVE FIGURES FOR FRENCH FORCES SEPARATELY OR, AS AN EXTREME, NOT TO GIVE ANY SPECIFIC FIGURES FOR THE FRENCH. HE SAID FRG WAS HOWEVER NOT REPEAT NOT PREPARED TO MAKE COMPROMISES REGARDING TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE FRENCH FORCES IN THE OPERATIONS OF THE COMMON CEILING. THIS WAS IN THE INTEREST OF FRENCH AND ESSENTIAL FOR FRG. RUTH BELIEVED FRENCH HAD NOW DROPPED THE MISTRAL CONCEPT OF UNILATERAL COMPENSATING DECLARATIONS AND CONSIDERED THIS A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT.

5. RUTH REAFFIRMED THAT THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS PLAYED SCARCELY ANY ROLE IN GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION. BUT, HE POINTED OUT, ALL FRG POLITICAL PARTIES SUPPORTED THE CURRENT NATO POSITION. SUCH SUPPORT WOULD PROBABLY CONTINUE AS LONG AS THE WESTERN POSITION REMAINED BASICALLY THE SAME, ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS PARITY AND COLLECTIVE CEILINGS. IF THESE ELEMENTS WERE TO CHANGE, INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS COULD ARISE IN THE FRG. RUTH NOTED THAT THE POSITION OF INFORMED FRG POLITICIANS TOWARDS THE NEGOTIATIONS WAS BASICALLY POSITIVE BECAUSE OF THESE TWO BASIC PRINCIPLES OF COLLECTIVITY AND PARITY. RUTH SAID THAT THE PUBLIC PRESENTATION OF OPTION III HAD ALSO DONE MUCH TO SENSITIZE THE GERMAN PUBLIC TO THESE PRINCIPLES.

6. RUTH NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS COULD EMBARRASS THE WEST IF THEY CHOSE TO DO SO ON THE DATA ISSUE. ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY COULD DECIDE TO REMAIN QUIET FOR A WHILE. IN ANY EVENT, THE WEST WAS UNTIMATELY VULNERABLE TO ATTACK IF NEW DATA WERE NOT TABLED. HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR THE WEST TO DO SOMETHING AND THAT WESTERN STONEWALLING TACTICS COULD BE EFFECTIVE ONLY FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME. HE CONSIDERED THERE WAS NO WAY AROUND DATA DISCUSSION AND THAT THE DATA DISCUSSION WAS BOTH THE ROUTE TO THE COMMON CEILING AND THE FRAMEWORK IN WHICH THE COMMON CEILING WOULD BE ACTIVELY DISCUSSED.

7. RUTH SAID HIS TENTATIVE CONCLUSION WAS THAT IT WAS BETTER TO CONTINUE DAMPING DOWN MULTILATERAL DATA DISCUSSION WITHIN NATO FOR THE TIME BEING. ON BALANCE, HE FAVORED CONTINUATION OF DISCUSSION ON A TRIPARTITE BASIS, WITH THE NEXT POSSIBLE STEP BEING AGREEMENT ON A POSSIBLE DRAFT TEXT WHICH MIGHT BE GIVEN THE FRENCH. THE MERE EXERCISE OF WORKING OUT SUCH A DOCUMENT MIGHT CONTRIBUTE TO CLARITY EVEN IF IT WERE THEN DECIDED NOT
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TO GIVE IT TO THE FRENCH AFTER ALL. IF IT WERE SO DECIDED, THE PAPER MIGHT THEN BE GIVEN THE FRENCH AS A NON-PAPER. RUTH SAID HE WOULD FORWARD A POSSIBLE DRAFT SHORTLY FOR COMMENT. IF A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WAS IN SIGHT, THE QUESTION COULD THEN BE REFERRED TO THE LARGER NATO FORUM FOR CONSIDERATION BY ALL THE ALLIES. RUTH SAID HE WAS WORKING ON A DRAFT NON-PAPER WHICH WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE U.S. AND UK EMBASSIES FOR TRANSMISSION TO CAPITALS.

8. RUTH INDICATED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO RAISE THE NEW FRENCH DATA POSITION WITH GISCARD FOLLOWING THE FRG ELECTIONS IF ALL OTHER ATTEMPTS TO MOVE THE FRENCH AT LOWER LEVELS HAD FAILED, BUT ONLY ON THE BASIS OF SPECIFIC FORMULAE SUCH AS RUTH ENVISAGED IN HIS PAPER, RATHER THAN IN THE ABSTRACT.

9. IN SUBSEQUENT CONVERSATION WITH ROTH, THE LATTER SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO RESOLVE THE DATA ISSUE AND THAT TO DO SO, IT WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY TO BE TOUGH WITH THE FRENCH AT A HIGH LEVEL. WITH REORGANIZATION OF THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN PROGRESS AND THE FRG AND U.S. ELECTIONS IN THE OFFING, CHANCES OF TAKING SUCH ACTION IN THE COMING WEEKS WERE SLIGHT. HENCE, OPENING OF SERIOUS DATA DISCUSSION WITH THE EAST WAS IMPROBABLE IN THE FIRST PART OF THE NEXT ROUND. ROTH BELIEVED THAT, AT LEAST FOR A TIME, THE SOVIETS MIGHT EXERCISE SOME RESTRAINT IN EXPLOITING ALLIED DISCOMFORTURE OVER WESTERN INABILITY TO TABLE DATA IN THE LIGHT OF UNDOUBTED SOVIET AWARENESS OF FRENCH ACTIONS AND THEIR GENERAL INTEREST IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT. ROTH AND RUTH STRESSED THE STRONG INTEREST OF FRG AUTHORITIES IN CONTINUING THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS. THEY CONSIDERED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE THE NEGOTIATIONS INDEFINITELY WITHOUT SOME SPECIFIC OUTCOME, BUT DID NOT CONSIDER THAT THERE WAS AS YET ANY TIME URGENCY.

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